

REMARKS

The Examiner is thanked for the due consideration given the application. The specification has been amended to insert headings.

Claims 1-26 are pending in the application. Claims 1-20 have been amended to improve the language in a non-narrowing fashion. Claims 21-26 are newly presented and are drawn to the same invention as claims 1-10 and 20 of Group I.

Election/Restriction

The claims of the invention have been restricted into the following groups:

Group I, claims 1-10 and 20 (and new claims 21-26), drawn to a steam cooking method, and

Group II, claims 11-19, drawn to a steam generator.

Group I, claims 1-10 and 20 (and new claims 21-26) is elected with traverse.

The Office Action asserts that the Groups I-II do not relate to a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1 because, under PCT Rule 13.2, they lack the same or corresponding special technical features.

However, it is respectfully noted that this patent application is a PCT application and that the claims have been considered as covering only 1 invention during the International Phase. Consequently the rules of the International Phase should

be applied regarding the unity of this application and thus only one independent invention is properly claimed in the instant claim set.

Also in regards to United States practice, MPEP 803 sets forth that there are 2 criteria for a proper requirement for restriction between patentably distinct inventions:

A) the inventions must be independent or distinct as claims; **and**

B) there should be a serious burden on the Examiner if restriction is not required.

In this case the method of cooking with steam set forth in Group I and the steam generated for practicing this method of Group II are technology so intimately interrelated that the search of one would automatically encompass the search of the other and thus no undue burden is placed upon the Examiner.

Additionally if there is any question about the propriety of grouping claims 21-26 to Group I, it is respectfully noted that claim 21 concerns a steam cooking oven with means for detecting an increase in temperature and means for triggering feeding of water which are present in claim 1 of Group I. Moreover the cooking phase in claim 1 is also present in claim 21. Finally, the steam cooking oven in claim 21 is used to practice the steam cooking method of claim 1, and the steam cooking method of claim 1 can be practiced only by a steam cooking oven having the technical features as claimed in claim 21.

Accordingly, for all the above reasons, rejoinder and examination of all the claims on the merits is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

Early and favorable considerations on the merits is respectfully requested.

Please charge the fee of \$312.00 for the claims in excess of 20 being paid online simultaneously herewith by credit card.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future submissions, to charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 25-0120 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17.

Respectfully submitted,

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